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PROBABLE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS RESULTS
OF THE WAR.

W. T. WHITLEY, M.A., LL.D., PRESTON, ENG.

The war is affecting directly the whole of the Old World, and is testing moral ideas, revealing them, remodeling them, in three great areas; Europe is predominantly Christian; Egypt, Asia Minor and Turkey, Moslem; the far East, Buddhist. Three great religions are put on their trial.

I. THE CHRISTIAN WORLD.

In Europe nearly the whole population professes to follow the Prince of Peace; and more than ten million men are in arms, determined to fight till their enemies are beaten. Only from Hungary does there come any whisper of a cessation without a settlement; even from Rome there is no call to a Truce of God.

In this paradoxical situation there have been a few who have boldly raised the previous question, Is war under any circumstances justifiable? Socialists had been working for international brotherhood, and the declaration of war was punctuated by the murder of Jaurès, a foremost spokesman. Quakers with some hesitation and reluctance gave their ancient testimony, and promptly gave of their thought, their wealth, their manhood and womanhood to the planning and equipping great ambulance and hospital trains, lest any should mistake their attitude. And a yet nobler example was given, when their collections for the prisoners taken from the other side, proved that it is still possible to love our enemies.

These, however, are the eddies. Nation after nation gave itself quickly and whole-heartedly to war. Is it possible to trace any moral motive in each? A citizen of a combatant country cannot hope to penetrate the motives

of his nation's foes, but he may venture to offer a guess at the best conceivable, and leave for others to supplement and rectify.

The Dual Monarchy had always felt a responsibility for the Balkans, had watched with uneasiness two small wars recently, had seen a little state emerge victorious from both, and found that the result was intrigue and unrest in her own domains. Forbearing long to take strong measures, it was obliged by the murder of the heir-apparent to make drastic demands in order to end the perpetual pin-pricking and scheming. There are limits to the misbehavior tolerated in little children; parents and teachers must at some stage use their power to uphold their authority and restore order. So Austria-Hungary seemed to reason, and to say that the hour had struck to teach that assassination was no longer a recognized remedy for despotism.

To which Russia responded that the remedy was worse than the disease; that it were better if the functions of prosecutor, judge, hangman, were separated; that there was such a thing as international right and courtesy, both which were being strained or denied.

What was Germany's leading idea? That she has arrived at a type of government and a degree of culture which have done great things for her; that she has been transformed by them in half a century into a front-rank nation, and this proves their excellence; that it were well if the whole world could be made to share in them, and that the hour had come to extend them far more widely. Germany has done in a few years what other nations have fumbled at for centuries, and have not done as well. Look at West Africa, where the British have been for hundreds of years, and the Liberians for scores; compare the undeveloped shiftless settlements with Togoland and Kamerun; remember that even Englishmen will take their passage on a Woermann boat rather than on the happy-go-lucky British mail. Look at South-West

Africa, compare the province of Angole, enslaved still by Portugal, or the Anglo-Dutch Union, with the intervening stretch, less desirable at first sight, yet put into order so quickly and so well by Germany. Look at the East, where Singapore, Java, Cochin-China, Macao, Hongkong show the best that four old-established nations have done, some of them working for nearly half a millennium; compare with the miracles at Kiao-Chow and the peaceful penetration of Shantung. Look at Samoa, where Germany and America started neck and neck; or at Papua, where Germany, Holland and Australia had equal chances on the same island; is it not clear that Germany knows best how to civilize and elevate? Nay, is she not the best Christianizing nation? to say nothing of the fact that the head of the Jesuits, that great Roman Catholic order, is German; look at her achievements as compared with Protestants of other lands. Was she not in the vanguard, and can any other country point to a community so devoted as the Moravian, which is simply a Church whose main object is missions? Does not the Basel society lead in industrial work, is not Warneck respected as one who sees farthest into the strategy of aggressive Christianity, are not the Kaiserswerth deaconesses known and honoured everywhere, in India is there a society more valued than the Gossner; where else do men see the home field so well worked as by the missionary conferences; what case is so remarkable as when a Higher Critic decides to lay aside his career in Europe, qualify himself afresh, and go to an obscure set of savages in Africa to take them the gospel? There is a culture, a Christian culture, which Germany enjoys, and which she is peculiarly qualified to impart rapidly and successfully. It is worth while to have a brief time of war, in order to level the barriers, and let the stream of German influence flow unimpeded over a wider field. And better a war terrible in intensity, that it may be brief, than long-drawn out, to leave all alike exhausted and angry.

Such is the best interpretation that an Englishman can give of German ideals. And to him it recalls the scene narrated by Matthew, when the Lord was tempted. It seems as if Germany has overlooked that there is no short cut to culture and religion, that the devil's tools and methods must not be used for Christ's work.

France and England stand for self-preservation and for the sacredness of the word pledged in treaty, for the defence of the weak wantonly attacked.

What now of the results, so far as we can gauge them yet? An Englishman cannot speculate intelligently on Belgium, Germany, Austria-Hungary, whence no news comes except in dribblets. But a Belgian tells him that the strain on faith in God is tremendous, raising the doubts that so oppressed Habakkuk, when his nation was trampled beneath the conqueror's hoofs. And he sees for himself how that half the Belgian refugees are not only anti-Catholic politically, which any one can verify is true of the nation, but that they are non-Christian, hating the intrusion of the priests, and quite content to abstain from all public worship. Will they, in their distress, turn to God, or will they content themselves by mild laughter at the heroics of Cardinal Mercier as a mere political move to get a Catholic hero who may match Max, burgomaster of Brussels, the anti-Catholic?

In England too, what is the result? No such moral uplift as in Russia, where the temptation of the saloon is in a day struck down; it is the curse of England still, and the various local authorities falter with the question, while the government is not bold enough to propose a national closing of saloons and distilleries, to economize health, morals, and food. What does the thermometer of church attendance tell? A temperature barely increased. The Free Churches have undertaken a Come-to-church campaign; and conferences of ministers say that the result was imperceptible. England has had too many privileges, is like the elder brother in the parable, not realizing yet the need of repentance.

But France? hence we hear of revival everywhere. Churches are full again. And as the conscription law gives no exemption to priest, pastor or rabbi, there are thousands of these in the trenches, showing that they are men, and that a man of religion is the best of men. Indeed, it is from the English trenches that we hear the best of effects on Englishmen. It is the soldiers at the front who welcome the chaplain, the soldiers from the front who are the best missionaries at home.

II. THE MOSLEM WORLD.

Nearly all Moslems are drawn into this war. Turkey stands with the central powers; Algiers, Tunis, Egypt, India and the millions under the Russian flag, are with the Allies. This is not without precedent, but the scale is immense. There can be no talk of a Holy War, when men of both religions are on each side.

What then will it mean religiously? For a Moslem, politics and religion are much entwined, and the political situation must be forecast. Is it too much to expect that the Turk will lose the last remnant of Europe, and that his empire will be Asia Minor, with Arabia? Then the Moslem world may begin to ask why a Sultan of Asia Minor should be Caliph, any more than a Sultan of Egypt. The Caliphs ruled at Bagdad and at Cairo centuries before Constantinople was theirs, or before Turks were heard of. And if unanimity may not be at once attained, there have been rival Caliphs before, as there are rival Sultans now, one under the tutelage of one Christian power, the other under another Christian power. There have been Caliphs in Egypt for centuries, wielding no temporal but only a spiritual power, like Popes at Rome.

Now Egypt has been Moslem thrice as long as Constantinople, and its mosque at Cairo is a centre to be compared only with Mecca. To it stream men from all the Moslem world, to be educated and to go back to their

nations and lead them. Britain has contrived to conciliate the Moslem authorities there, at a cost which has often chafed Christian missionaries. It would be a strange turn of events if Egypt should again become the political and religious centre of Islam, with its Sultan protected by Britain, the Caliph guaranteed his spiritual independence if he reside there. Yet such a consummation seems distinctly probable.

III. THE BUDDHIST WORLD.

The Far East is shaken by the world cataclysm. The mainland of China, the islands of Polynesia, the waters of the Pacific, have all been disturbed. What is the impression left? In especial, what will Japan and China feel?

It will not be possible for Britain to treat Japan as an inferior race. Whatever America, Canada, Australia, may feel, it is impossible to associate in time of war and to profit thereby, then to draw aloof as superior. Old problems are intensified, and re-stated. There must be a better understanding between Caucasian and Mongol, and Britain is bound to strive for this, to solve the problem she has made more acute. And the solution will be much easier if the barrier of a different religion is lowered. Christians are face to face with a task too long neglected; it has become an urgent matter to concentrate thought, material, men on this field.

China shows a more complex situation. The president is far advanced towards proclaiming himself emperor, and his reactionary policy has led him to revive the State sacrifice at the Altar of Heaven. The Christian opportunity does not seem directly affected. But in one thing there will be opportunity, the "leases" of Chinese territory. Three fortresses on the sea-board of North China have been stolen from her, and the thefts have produced war after war. If there can be restitution, a restitution avowedly due not to fear but to a sense of

right and justice, it will be an object lesson that China can appreciate, which may go some way to obliterate the opium wrong. She has felt keenly that Europe exalts might above right, that the real Christian code is lower than the Confucian. A frank undoing of wrong, under no compulsion, may do more for the cause of morals and religion than fifty years of preaching without practice.